



MAYOR'S NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday, May 7, 2003

WEST WARD FIREHOUSE DEDICATED, DESIGNED TO LOWER RESPONSE TIMES FOR FIRE SERVICE

Mayor Douglas H. Palmer and Trenton Fire Director Dennis Keenan today dedicated the new West Ward Firehouse, which will enable the City's Fire Department to improve the response times for fire service in the West Ward and across the city.

"The people of Trenton have talked about having a fire station in this area for 80 years," Mayor Douglas H. Palmer said. "Now, we have achieved that goal. When the West Ward Firehouse opens at West State Street and Lee Avenue this coming Monday, May 12, we will be able to cut our West Ward response times from four and five minutes down to less than two minutes, as it is in other parts of the city."

National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) guidelines call for response times of four minutes or less, said Director Keenan. With the new West Ward Firehouse dedicated today, Trenton now easily meets that NFPA guideline.

The new firehouse also has put the City's response times well within the standards of the Insurance Services Office (ISO), which rates cities on a 10-level scale that influences insurance premiums, Keenan added. "Trenton has a Class 2 rating and while the West Ward Firehouse will not, in itself, move us to the top of the scale, it will improve our overall score," Keenan said.

(more)

The Insurance Services Office, an agency that sets base fire insurance rates, has standards for fire response related to the distances that fire apparatus travel, Keenan explained. "To receive full credit, all built-upon areas of the city must have an adequately-equipped, responding first-due engine company within 1.5 miles and an adequately-equipped, responding ladder company within 2.5 miles," he said. With the addition of the new West Ward Firehouse, most of Trenton is now within a one-mile radius of *two* fire companies.

Captain Robert Multop, a 33-year Fire Department veteran, will be the senior house captain at the new facility dedicated today. Engine Company #9 will work out of the new firehouse.

Another important part of the history of the West Ward Firehouse is that it sits on a remediated brownfield site, on which the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), State Department of Environmental Protection, and City Department of Housing and Economic Development have collaborated to clean up. The site, formerly home to a service station and other commercial businesses, needed four underground storage tanks removed along with contaminated soil before the new firehouse could be constructed.

"This project is an important example of how government agencies can cooperate to improve safety on many levels," Mayor Palmer said. "With this Firehouse, we have eliminated a serious environmental concern, added a stable new neighbor on West State Street, and enhanced our Fire Department's emergency response time. That's a hard act to follow."

"The West Ward Firehouse project is proof positive that old, useless eyesores can be cleaned and revamped so that they enhance the aesthetics of the neighborhood and, in this case, the quality of life for the West Ward," said Jane M. Kenny, EPA Regional Administrator. "I applaud the City of Trenton for its success in turning a liability into an asset."